

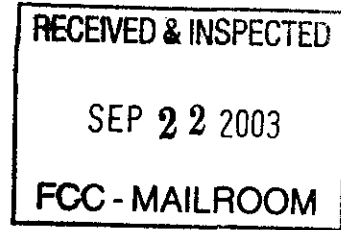


Montana Public Service Commission

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September 17, 2003



Ms. Marlene H. Dortch
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: CC Docket No. 96-45; Montana's Certification of Non-Rural and Rural Carriers Pursuant to 47 C.F.R. § 54.313; Universal Service Support for High-Cost Areas

Dear Ms. Dortch:

Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules provide that all states desiring non-rural and rural local exchange carriers within their jurisdictions receive federal universal service support for high-cost areas must annually file a certification with the FCC and the administrator of the high-cost universal service support mechanism. 47 C.F.R. § 54.313. The certification must be that the support provided to such carriers within the state will be used only for the provision, maintenance, and upgrading of facilities and services for which the support is intended. *Id.*

Montana desires that the following non-rural carriers receive federal universal service support for high-cost areas (six-digit NECA code included):

1. Qwest Corporation -- 485104
2. Mid-Rivers Telephone Cooperative, Inc. -- no code reported
3. 3 Rivers Telephone Cooperative, Inc. -- 489003

Qwest is the incumbent local exchange carrier and designated incumbent eligible telecommunications carrier in Montana's non-rural area. Mid-Rivers is a competitive local exchange carrier and designated competitive eligible telecommunications carrier within Montana's non-rural area, specifically the Qwest exchanges of Wibaux, Terry, Fairview, Glendive, Miles City, and Sidney. 3 Rivers is a competitive local exchange carrier and designated competitive eligible telecommunications carrier within Montana's non-rural area, specifically the Qwest exchange of Conrad.

Montana also desires that the following rural carriers receive federal universal service support for high-cost areas (six-digit NECA code included):

1. Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc. -- 482235 and 483308
2. Central Montana Communications, Inc. -- 483310
3. CenturyTel of Montana, Inc. -- 482249
4. Citizens Communications Company -- 484322
5. Hot Springs Telephone Company -- 482241

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DATE

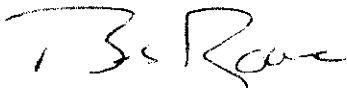
6. InterBel Telephone Cooperative, Inc. -- 482242
7. Lincoln Telephone Company, Inc. -- 482244
8. Mid-Rivers Telephone Cooperative, Inc. -- 482246
9. Nemont Telephone Cooperative, Inc. -- 482247
10. Northern Telephone Cooperative, Inc. -- 482248
11. Project Telephone Company -- 482250
12. Range Telephone Cooperative -- 482251
13. Reservation Telephone Cooperative -- 381632
14. Ronan Telephone Company -- 482252
15. RT Communications -- 512251
16. Southern Montana Telephone Company -- 482254
17. 3 Rivers Telephone Cooperative, Inc. -- 482255
18. Tri County Telephone Association, Inc. (TCT West, Inc.) -- 512296
19. Triangle Telephone Cooperative Association, Inc. -- 482257
20. West River Cooperative Telephone Company -- 391689

All carriers listed immediately above, are rural incumbent local exchange carriers and designated rural incumbent eligible telecommunications carriers in Montana.

The Montana Public Service Commission (Montana PSC), the appropriate Montana regulatory authority to do so, hereby certifies for 2004 support that the above non-rural and rural local exchange carriers, all being designated eligible telecommunications carriers, within Montana's jurisdiction eligible to receive support through the federal high-cost universal service support mechanism will use all federal high-cost support provided through the federal rural high-cost funding mechanism for and only for the provision, maintenance, and upgrading of facilities and services for which the support is intended, consistent with the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, including by § 254(e), Telecommunications Act of 1996.

A copy of this certification has been provided to the Universal Service Administrative Company, administrator of the federal high-cost universal service support mechanism. If you have any questions or comments regarding this certification please feel free to contact me at any time. Thank you.

Sincerely,



BOB ROWE
Chairman, Montana PSC

BR/cj

cc: Irene Flannery
Universal Service Administrative Company
2120 L. St., N.W. -- Suite 600
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